



O Estado do Mundo: Museu do Atlântico Sul

Assaf Gruber, Charbel-joseph H. Boutros, Gisela Casimiro e Rodrigo Ribeiro Saturnino (ROD), Jacira da Conceição, Jonathan Monk, Juraci Dórea, Luísa Mota, Marcelino Santos, Márcio Carvalho, Maxim Malhado, Tenzin Phuntsog, Tuti Minervino, works from ethnographic collections, as well as publications by the Portuguese philosopher and educator Agostinho da Silva

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The State of the World: The Museum of the South Atlantic

In a three page, typewritten document elaborated in Bahia's capital in 1965 (Salvador, situated in the northeast of the Brazilian territory), the Portuguese philosopher, educator and publisher Agostinho da Silva introduces the idea of establishing a new museological institution in a colonial fortress on the shores of the city: "Featuring elements for an exhibition that does not interrupt, but rather emphasises the architectural value of the fortress; elements of absolute didactic clarity, but without refusing their complexity or rigour of science, including objects that, although of minimal intrinsic value, excel due to their high quality and appearance as a whole; this new museological institution will comprise the *Museum of the South Atlantic*, installed in the fortress of São Marcelo, covering the entire area stretching from the heights of Venezuela to the Antarctica."

On the last page of the document Agostinho da Silva outlines all the nations which should be represented in the spaces of the future *Museum of the South Atlantic*: "Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Central Africa Republic, Congo, South Africa, Benin, Ivory Coast, Togo, Cameroon, European Overseas Ultramarine Territories, Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, Venezuela, Guyana, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Falklands, Suriname, USA (Antarctica), Soviet Union (to be defined)".

In fact, *The Museum of the South Atlantic*, as a project, belongs to a set of different political efforts made by Agostinho da Silva during his period in Brazilian exile (1944–1969). During these years, his plans and positions were led by a profound reflection on the "Portuguese Presence" (the past and the present of the colonial dynamic) and a critical speculation regarding the reorganisation of the power structures on a global scale. Within the historical context of the debate on non-aligned countries and its policies, Agostinho took the perspective of the Portuguese colonial presence and its consequences as a starting point to investigate what he foresees as another process of submission to come: a moment in which the capitalist and the socialist systems in the West would find in time an agreement, an entente, in which new forms of imperialism and exploitation will determine the global rules.

As Pedro Agostinho outlines "he said that the main political opposition during that period (1960–61) was along an east-west axis, which has

generated two hemispheres – which was obvious –, but this would have more or less a short duration – which was no longer so obvious. Making no illusions about the opposing forces and the imperial tendencies of both sides, he affirmed that the Soviet Union, the United States and Western Europe would come closer and closer, with their respective areas of influence. This movement would most likely result in a deal, in which the richest, industrialised, and, in a certain sense, "white" countries, would be united or at least share an understanding to exploit the poor, predominantly agricultural workers, and of a variety of "colours". At that moment, the situation would turn ninety degrees and the opposition would be North-South, with the corresponding hemispheres imposing on those below the New Equator (more than geographical, an economic and socio-political region) the need to be united in its own defence, in the name of the transformations that Agostinho wanted to see happening in the world."²

The State of the World: organisation of space

The museum as a Western category seems limited to a series of contradictions concerning its capacity to articulate transcultural entanglements without static orders, categorisations and hierarchies defining an object as art and non-art, modern, primitive or contemporary, artistic or ethnographic, just to mention a few examples of the normative discourse of the museum. Having the exhibition as a noble transmission tool for its discourse, the museum's contradictions often materialise when the exhibition is conceived: as an apparatus reaffirming the canonical, tending to place the audience as passive observer of established cultural identities.

The Museum of the South Atlantic since its conception places the exhibition as casually encyclopaedic, able to anthologise the discourses, formally and thematically, and to reach a rapid turnover of styles and forms. The *department of the State of the World* aims to realise this *Museum of South Atlantic's* perspective, conceiving the exhibition as a mental space where the correlations between the pieces on display (artworks, archives or museological material) are happening by intermittent connections, even confrontational ones, and where the

² Pedro Agostinho. Revista Afro-Ásia [Afro-Ásia Magazine], Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais da Universidade da Bahia [Centre for Afro-Oriental Studies at the University of Bahia] (1995).

aesthetic forms arisen from the political brawl can be observed as haunted forms culminating in new positions in the present moment.

The Israeli artist Assaf Gruber and his “Movement 6” could be seen as an exemplary case. Gruber juxtaposes two moments in the European history: the political protests in West-Berlin during the 1970s and 1980s, shadowed by a ghostly unanimated figure, a precious red coral found in the collection of the Grünes Gewölbe in the city of Dresden, in Germany. Created as a “hall of treasures”, the Grünes Gewölbe was imagined by Frederick Augustus I in the 18th century as a public museum, displaying the economic dynamism of the monarchy through objects which could translate, by gold, emeralds and other precious stones, the magnificent ambiance for the trade among European centres of power. In this museum, the red corals are also representing the heads of the King and the Queen.

The politics of the object can be observed within the entire exhibition proposed by the *department of the State of the World*, for example, in the sculptures from Mário Teixeira’s collection (the hunter, the mother, the seated one). They are allegorical figures of power and transcendence. Similarly, the Karajá dolls from the Bananal Island in the north of Brazil – loaned from José Carlos Santana Pinto’s collection – produced by Karajá women. These ceramic dolls register the experience of the interethnic contact between the Karajás and the colonisers. They are a document of resilience.

The Bananal Island is located in the Amazon region, surrounded by the Araguaia River. From 1967 to 1974, this was a place where the Araguaia Guerrilla found a shelter. Organised by the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) and rallying around 60 combatants (students, workers, activists), the Araguaia Guerrilla intended to be an armed opposition against the Brazilian dictatorship of the period, but the forces of the army by means of point-blank executions and systematic torture eliminated it. The Araguaia Guerrilla was imagined as a counterpoint to the failure of the urban guerrilla in the Brazilian cities and as a strategy against the regime. The repressive forces murdered the architect of the urban guerrilla, Carlos Marighella, in 1969, the same year he wrote and distributed his “Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla”. The manual was translated in Germany the following year (and adopted by the Red Army Faction, a West German far-left militant organisation) as a means for insurrection in German society. This is precisely the age of turmoil referred to in Assaf Gruber’s “Movement 6”.

This circular pace of the exhibition has its roots in the original project for the *Museum of South Atlantic*, which should be established in the fortress of São Marcelo (built in 1623), assuming the circular architecture of the place, created in the name of vigilance and protection. In *the State of the World*, a “circular reading” takes place. However, the correlations in the exhibition space are not limited to it and are unfolding in other directions.

The artist Márcio Carvalho (with “Memória para 14 Bustos” and “12 placas”) is asking for profound reflection on the political questions involved in the idea of a monument as a document of History, challenging how and who represents such memory. In certain moments, this same displacement of memory as collective and personal experience can be engraved in the body itself. The work of American-Tibetan Tenzin Phuntsog (“My Skins”) depicts the process of a skin changing during prolonged sun exposure. Tibetans have evolved to thrive at higher elevations, living closer to the sun and under intense UVB rays, resulting in a rare genetic anomaly called the “high-altitude” gene: “My skin soaks in the sun it does not burn very easily. This image of ‘sun-beaten’ skin connects me to my uncle in Tibet who I never had an opportunity to meet due to political restrictions of entering Tibet”, says Tenzin.

In the geographical layers of historical anomalies, but also in the immaterial, aesthetic forms develop their politics. Being born amidst the Lebanese conflict, the work of Charbel-joseph H. Boutros traces how a political context is shaping a sensibility during moments of everyday life. In his “Dead Drawing”, he makes use of Conceptual Art as a language to translate a personal and cultural experience. His piece documents an action that happened in the past, the motion of a hand, as an invisible gesture animating the present.

The same conceptual language is also found in “Somewhere Soon” by the British artist Jonathan Monk, a work that announces the future where an encounter will take place in an undefined moment. For the Brazilian artist Tuti Minervino and his conceptual sentence present in this exhibition, the language is a problem in itself. Employing a phrase written in Brazilian Portuguese, defying its translation to other Portuguese languages, the meeting in the future has already taken place. What’s the meaning of a cultural misunderstanding?

Juraci Dórea, from Bahia, had worked for more than four decades on his project “Terra”. While travelling the countryside of Bahia, Dórea

researched the unique archaeology of small communities, where colonial mythologies are part of the social fabric. As a way to represent the bonding between the artist and the local population, a sculpture is made with wood and leather only to disappear over time, surviving only in the memory or photographic documents such as the one exhibited in *the State of the World* – originally prepared by Dórea for his participation in the 43rd Venice Biennale in 1988. Maxim Malhado, also from Bahia, is an artist who came from a similar community. At the beginning of the 21st century, he developed an art gallery in his village, where everyone could be an artist: a gallery imagined by Maxim as three wood houses. As in Charbel-joseph H. Boutros' work presented here, the motion of a hand in the past creates a new possibility in the present.

The hand's gesture continues to resonate in the tapestry of Marcelino Santos, from Cape Verde. Santos was taught at the local National Centre for Art, Crafts and Design, created in 1976 as a Cooperative of Resistance, aiming to collect, protect and transmit the knowledge of craft as a cultural identity following the independence of the country. In Cape Verde, cotton is a fibre with a relation to the past, when enslaved people turned cotton into handicrafts. This knowledge migrated to Brazil due to slave trade. During the 19th century, a group of black women from there, weavers, bought some land (thanks to the commerce of products they made by hand) in the state of Pernambuco, in the Brazilian northeast, founding a *quilombo* (a space for resistance): Conceição das Crioulas. Here the aesthetic form performs its politics.

For Jacira da Conceição, also from Cape Verde, the Brazilian *quilombo* in her experience is located in Itamatatua, in the state of Maranhão. During a trip through Latin America Jacira witnessed the 300 year-old tradition in pottery preserved by the women of the local community. She has since learned the techniques of pottery in her country, with the community of Trás di Munti, in Tarrafal. The sculptural forms exhibited in *the State of the World* are contrasting two representations: a group made of four pieces evokes the elements of nature (air, water, earth, fire), facing an isolated piece, named "O Umbigo (centro) do Mundo". Jacira is suggesting how to observe the immaterial.

In the work of the Portuguese artist Luisa Mota, the immaterial has a cosmic meaning, it is never neutral in its movements, because it encloses power, a spiritual energy transfigured in an object or a performative act. The series "Macumbinhas" (2014) are not representational, because

they are active objects of healing, "a powerful tool to heal and transmute negative energy into positive energy", says Mota. The "Macumbinhas" can dissipate the feelings of angst.

In the meantime, we ask, what could happen when the energetic power is neutralised?

The Ashanti Dolls (from José Carlos Santana Pinto's Collection) depict the wish for motherhood and the fear of infertility, and bear their own history as an object of desire. The Ashanti Empire was one of the few African States to succeed in the resistance against the European colonisation, and between 1823 and 1896, fought four wars against the British Empire, being defeated only in 1903. Since then, the dolls became an "African souvenir" and an ethnographic *fétiche* in the West. What was priceless became a cultural trophy, and an entire mythology was lost.

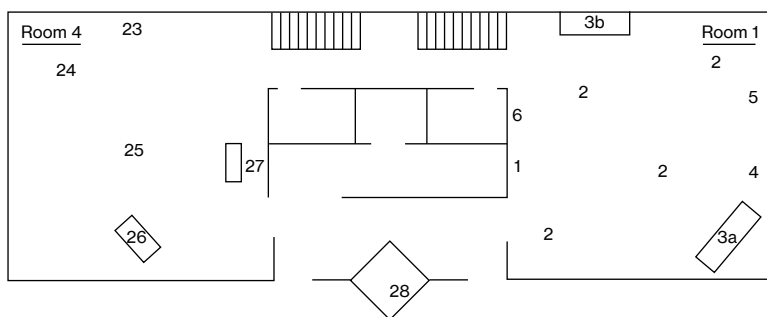
The souvenir (of what, precisely?) is discussed by artists Gisela Casimiro and ROD in an installation ("Priceless"), which makes use of one element from the "grammar" of the museological institutions – the gift shop. The installation comments on the trade of images, which follows the trade of bodies. Forms are migrating from one continent to another, and the political meaning embedded in it should be de-repressed to regain its meanings and complexities: it's a revelation to memory.

At the moment that the *Museum of the South Atlantic* initiates its activities, the institution would like to express its gratitude to all the artists, collections, centres of research and the Galerias Municipais de Lisboa for the supportive institutional dialogue.

Museum of the South Atlantic – MSA
Marcelo Rezende, Berlin, 25.08.2022

The full version of the curatorial essay by Marcelo Rezende can be found in the Journal section of our website www.galeriasmunicipais.pt

Ground Floor



1.
 Artista: Luísa Mota
OROMUXINO, 2014
 Bijuterias, amethyst druses, selenite rods, orange selenite rods, tektites, 65 x 47 cm
 Courtesy the artist

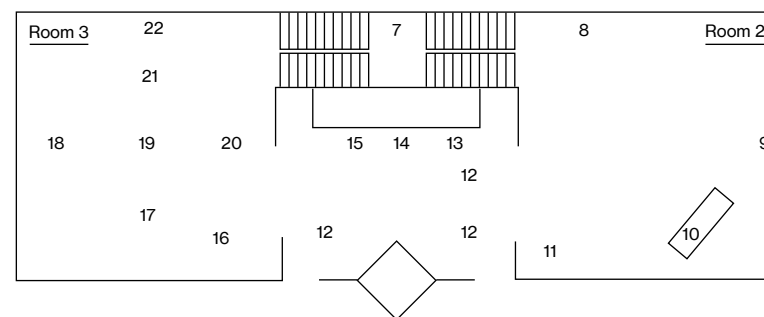
2.
 Artista desconhecido
 Poupée Ashanti (Gana), n. d.
 Wood, beads, seeds, fabric
 Col. José Carlos Santana Pinto

- #1. 30 x 13 x 5 cm
- #2. 33 x 11 x 10 cm
- #3. 27 x 121,5 x 8 cm
- #4. 47 x 17 x 10 cm
- #5. 32 x 12,5 x 10 cm
- #6. 35 x 16 x 10 cm
- #7. 35 x 12 x 10 cm
- #8. 48 x 14,5 x 10 cm
- #9. 28 x 13 x 8 cm
- #10. 30 x 13 x 8 cm
- #11. 34,5 x 17,5 x 10 cm
- #12. 25 x 10 x 4 cm
- #13. 27,5 x 10 x 5 cm
- #14. 33 x 11 x 8 cm
- #15. 30 x 12 x 4 cm
- #16. 37 x 12,5 x 10 cm

3.
 Collection of 21 publications by Agostinho da Silva
 Courtesy Associação Agostinho da Silva, Lisbon

3a
 - Agostinho da Silva, "Material solicitado pelo Museu Atlântico Sul", 1965
 Typewritten document by Roberto Pinho Edited by Amon. Archive Roberto Pinho.
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Sol*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942
 - Agostinho da Silva, *Viagem à Lua*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: textos para a juventude, 1ª série", Lisbon: Published by the author, 1943 (?)
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Planeta Marte*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1940
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Transformismo*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942
 - Agostinho da Silva, *Como se faz um túnel*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: textos para a juventude. 1ª série", Lisboa: Published by the author, 1943 (?)
 - Agostinho da Silva, *As Viagens de Colombo*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942
 - Agostinho da Silva, *História dos Estados Unidos*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1940
 - Walt Whitman, *Fóllhas de Erva*, in Col. "Antologia: Introdução aos grandes autores", Lisboa: Published by the author, 1943
 - Damião de Gois, *Descobrimientos dos Portugueses*, in Col. "Antologia: Introdução aos grandes autores", Lisboa: Published by the author, 1941
 - Thomas More, *Utopia*, in Col. "Antologia: Introdução aos grandes autores", Lisboa, 1946

First Floor



3b
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Islamismo*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Budismo*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1940
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Cristianismo*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942
 - Agostinho da Silva (org.), *As Aranhas*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: Textos para a mocidade", Lisboa, 1939
 - Agostinho da Silva, *O Sahará*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1940
 - Agostinho da Silva (org.), *A Vida dos Esquimaus*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: Textos para a mocidade", Lisboa: Seara Nova, 1938
 - Agostinho da Silva (org.), *A Última Viagem de Scott*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: Textos para a mocidade", Lisboa, 1939
 - Agostinho da Silva (org.), *Piccard na Estratosfera*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: textos para a juventude", Lisboa, 1938
 - Agostinho da Silva, *Aventuras com Tubarões*, in Col. "À volta do mundo: textos para a juventude. 1ª série", Lisboa: Published by the author, 1943 (?)
 - Agostinho da Silva, *As Cooperativas*, in Col. "Iniciação: Cadernos de informação cultural", Lisboa, 1942

4.
 Luísa Mota
MUMU, 2014
 Bijoux jewellery, metallic chain, boji balls, variscites, 68 x 38 cm
 Courtesy the artist

5.
 Luísa Mota
LOULEIRO, 2014
 Bijoux jewellery, metallic chain, aragonites, pirites, mahogany obsidian arrowheads, galena calcite, tektite and citrine, 67 x 56 cm
 Courtesy the artist

6.
 Assaf Gruber
Movement 6, 2022
 Photography, c-print, 42 x 56 cm
 Col. Marcelo Rezende

7.
 Jonathan Monk
Somewhere Soon, 2010
 Textile work in banner format and screen print, edition of 40, 120 x 150 cm
 Col. Marcelo Rezende

8.
 Tenzin Phuntsog
My Skins, 2019
 4 Photographs, 66 x 48 cm (each)
 Courtesy the artist

9. Márcio Carvalho
Memórias para 14 bustos, n. d.
Marielle Franco, Patrice Lumumba,
Rainha Ginga, Dandara dos Palmares,
Maria Firmina dos Reis, Maria Filipa, Luís
Gama, Josina Muthemba, Amílcar Cabral,
Francisco Xavier do Amaral, Zumbi dos
Palmares, Ganga Zumba, Chimaji Appa,
Besouro Mangangá
Micropigment on Fabriano paper,
watermarked, 29,7 x 42 cm (each)
Courtesy the artist
10. Documents Archive: Decolonization in
Africa
AFRICANA, *Mozambique will be Free*,
Committee of Returned Volunteers / New
York Africa, New York, 1969
16 Postcards from the MPLA Labor Party,
1978
Carlos Marighella, *Mini-Handbuch des
Stadtguerilla*, Author's Edition Berlin, 1970
Angola, *What is the use of so much blood*,
Angola Solidarity Committee, London, 1975
Col. Marcelo Rezende
11. Marcelino Santos
Sem Título, n.d.
Tapestry, 180 X 147 cm
Col. Embaixada de Cabo Verde
12. Unknown artist
Carajá, Bananal Island (Brazil), n. d.
Baked clay with drawings
Col. José Carlos Santana Pinto
#1. Baked clay with drawings, 19 x 9 x 5
cm
#2. Baked clay with drawings, 21 x 11 x
11 cm
#3. Baked clay with drawings, 23 x 10 x
9,5 cm
#4. Baked clay with drawings, 20 x 9 x
9 cm
#5. Baked clay with drawings, feathers,
fabric, 35 x 11 x 9 cm
#6. Baked clay with drawings, feathers,
fabric, glass beads, 23 x 11 x 10,5 cm
- #7. Baked clay with drawings, 15 x 10 x 6
cm
#8. Baked clay with drawings, 19 x 7 x 9
cm
#9. Baked clay with drawings, 24 x 10 x
5,5 cm
#10. Baked clay with drawings, fabric, 23
x 9,5 x 5 cm
13. Luísa Mota
LÊNDULA, 2014
Bijoux jewellery, metallic chain, ruby
zoisite, amethyst, blue calcite, opal, 64 x
51 cm
Courtesy the artist
14. Luísa Mota
SÍRIUS, 2014
Bijoux jewellery, metallic chain, greengold,
optic calcite, green calcite, apatite,
lapidated crystal quartz, 79 x 49 cm
Courtesy the artist
15. Luísa Mota
SARAMULE, 2014
Bijoux jewellery, metallic chain, citrines,
malachite, rubilites, 77 x 43 cm
Courtesy the artist
16. Maxim Malhado
Three Popular Houses, 2014
Wood
#1, 4,5 x 4 x 2,7 cm
#2, 3,5 x 3,3 x 2,5 cm
#3, 2,3 x 3 x 2,5 cm
Col. Marcelo Rezende
17. Jacira da Conceição
Terra, 2022
Ceramics and engobes, 175 x 47 x Ø 50 cm
Courtesy the artist
18. Jacira da Conceição
Água, 2022
Ceramics and engobes, 180 x 54 x Ø 40 cm
Courtesy the artist
19. Jacira da Conceição
O Umbigo (Centro) do Mundo, 2022
Ceramics and engobes, 149 x 47 x Ø 47 cm
Courtesy the artist
20. Jacira da Conceição
Fogo, 2022
Ceramics and engobes, 175 x 56 x Ø 45 cm
Courtesy the artist
21. Jacira da Conceição
Ar, 2022
Ceramics and engobes, 149 x 47 x Ø 47 cm
Courtesy the artist
22. Charbel-joseph H. Boutros
Dead Drawing, 2011
Nails and graphite, 13 x 13 cm
Col. Marcelo Rezende
23. Márcio Carvalho
Pedro Álvares Cabral 4.2 km
D. João I 2,5 km
Vasco da Gama 1,2 km
Afonso de Albuquerque 7,3 km
João Mª Ferreira do Amaral 10,5 km
D. Carlos I 7,5 km
Padre António Vieira 2,6 km
Padrão dos Descobrimentos 8 km
Marquês de Pombal 3,9 km
Fernão de Magalhães 5,4 km, 2022
Metal road signs, 145,5 x 30 cm (each)
Courtesy the artist
24. Unknown artist
Fon Hunter, transition from the 19th to the
20th century
Bronze figure, 22 x 9 x 8 cm
Col. Mário Teixeira
- Unknown artist
Maternity, transition from the 19th to the
20th century
Bronze figure, 18 x 6 x 5 cm
Col. Mário Teixeira
25. Unknown artist
Female figure Mangbetu, transition from
the 19th to the 20th century
Bronze figure, 46 x 26 x 26 cm
Col. Mário Teixeira
26. Juraci Dórea
Projeto Terra, 1988
10 Postcards, print on paper, 10 x 15 cm
(cada)
Col. Marcelo Rezende
27. Gisela Casimiro and Rodrigo Ribeiro
Saturnino (ROD)
Priceless, 2022
Cups, plates, puzzles, t-shirts, postcards,
notebooks, posters, food products,
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artists
28. Tuti Minervino
*fez show depois fechou eles todos fecham
e todo mundo sai*, 2014
Vinyl, dimensions variable
Col. Marcelo Rezende